

Session Title:	Where are we heading with Access and Participation?
Speaker(s):	<i>Dr Kate Wicklow, Guild HE</i>
Chair:	Jonny Atkinson -White
Reporter:	Fiona Curry

Speaker/Institution Bio/Information:	Director Policy Guild HE, Insight Access and student experience.
Overview/Aim of session:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Challenges and where we are. • Policy context government, regulatory expectations OfS. Civic and social missions.
Workshop Content	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 50% participation in Higher Education from government target dead. • More focus on who is going and is it helping? • Rhetoric trying to create culture war between traditional attendees and those we're trying to encourage. • Public good narrative impossible or hard to quantify. • Robbins report- impacting narrative now still. • Recruitment is seen as a ruthless profiteering exercise. • Need to combat this narrative. • Hard to talk about what HE is for. Student loan challenging. • Strengthening of technical education is important. Rhetoric- specific qualifications are needed to meet a specific job need. • Students are thinking more strategically about their quals- they think they will lead to certain jobs – not true. • Need to be savvy HE is being pitched as academic or vocational routes. • Ministers want more L4 &5 not L6- to decrease student loan book.

- They are just seeing the qualification – not wrap around benefits, student experience.
- Students need to be able to try new things to experience new opportunities.
- Government looking to reduce coasting to uni without understanding of other options.
- Y8-13 will have at least 6 opportunities to meet with people around technical education. Careers advise push.
- Unis seen in policy as big schools.
- We're highly experienced, with an international reputation, supporting individuals to achieve. Not big corporate.
- LLE interesting. Phase 1 credit-based funding- HE has been calling for this, for a long time. Step on, off to courses.
- Phase 2 micro credentials and stack modules- stack credits between universities, someone has to validate- complex and confusing.
- Gov committed to delivering by 2025- political turmoil will stop that deadline.
- Press and government have a view of what we do- new free speech bill. Interesting environment for how we include all students regardless of their backgrounds.
- Ongoing conversation- what is social mobility? Not just getting in but getting on. Cohort experience not individual. Degrees are not for everyone rhetoric.
- Admissions freedom- Augar report recommended number controls.
- Personal view- expensive to deliver. Minimum eligibility requirements are not effective to limit numbers.
- Gov hate conditional unconditional offers- memorandum was implemented. Values of GuildHE admissions practice, government will implement controls to prevent certain practices.
- Crises- mental health, cost of living. Expensive and stressful environment of university.
- £15million in hardship funding distributed through OfS announced today. Announced total £276 million available to universities. OfS teaching grant for students – not targeted mental health or hardship funding. Not earmarked.
- Tuition fees freeze impact on universities.
- New Director- OfS. From school background seen as critical friend.
- Age decision making 7, but currently not supported to do primary outreach.
- Problem- more money spent on attainment, grad outcomes and student experience rather than

	<p>outreach. Complacency that prior achievement sets people up to achieve at university.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need more time and encouragement. • Understand adult skills alongside study skills. Equally important. Many will need to work – substantial difference, choices between work, additional reading and attendance. • Lost learning and school performance. Take responsibility to get qualifications to get in. So not an excuse that x type of student doesn't get AAB for example. • B3 conditions- quality agenda. Retention, final degree outcome and jobs weighted more heavily than access. TEF- looking at how providers plug attainment gap to raise outcomes/ quality. • Synergies Equality and Diversity and Access. • Government focus is not on this synergy, rather focus on sexual harassment. • Will need to connect teams to support beginning to when they leave and improve alumni activity. • PAYE data- how much someone is paid for up to 10 years and grad outcomes 15 months, only measures. • Intersectionality is important rather than looking at individual markers in isolation. • Leveling up discussions- needs to be coordinated to make tangible difference. Universities are also major employers/civic anchors.
Case Studies/Examples:	N/A
Scenarios/Roundtable discussions:	N/A
Questions and Answers:	<p>How do we combat rhetoric? We've bought into short answers- "you'll have small amounts to pay back and get a good job" rather than more complex answer- other benefits etc./not linear outcomes.</p> <p>Getting good press is hard- So need to work collaboratively together. Communicate with GuildHE so they can help. More impact with Ministers. Set out values, tell stories.</p> <p>Hard to be motivated in this climate. Many of us are from access backgrounds. Emotional overload, not feeling valued. The school</p>

	<p>system has it harder, increases our challenges, so open up conversations, networks, environments for likeminded people to come together. Hopefully over the wave of isolating from each other. Crises are bringing people together and community support. Hope is not lost, don't think need change of government to encourage communities to come together. Networks to consider solutions.</p> <p>Post-covid challenges to collab with schools and colleges. Finding this hard. Advice?</p> <p>Debunk myth- we do not provide speal of just recruitment-also other opportunities and types of degrees. Helpful not just recruitment drive. Uniconnect might be the new way to work with schools. Can utilise social media to go directly to students. E.g. where are the students- TikTok- get in to their spaces. Strategically about where they are trying to get information from.</p> <p>Where is PQA? Dead! Think it's gone, no time.</p> <p>Apps across sector and down – why?</p> <p>Young people losing confidence in themselves not necessarily sector. (Though media trying to spin this). 2 ½ years fractious relationships with own cohort and education. Need more time.</p> <p>Stacking courses- how might that affect access students and cost for e.g. Travel costs etc.</p> <p>Also why is that healthy for an individual to pick and choose. Mature students may want uni experience, most concerned about LLE changing student loan record- headline number £9250 x4. Number will decrease over time. Students to understand, can't completely chop and change. As to what can be validated or not. What gov wants is 30-60 credits that the employer wants to do. Need to be careful with IAG. Autonomy to push back on employer to pay.</p> <p>Civic agenda- Access and Participation, done right integrated to civic agenda and socio-economic challenges of community. Responsibility- any examples where APP work is embedded and dovetail well?</p> <p>Rural and coastal institutions. Must have slightly different conversations about how they service the needs of their community. Marketing and research departments working with access and recruitment.</p> <p>Kate.Wicklow@guildhe.ac.uk</p>
<p>Summary Key takeaways:</p>	<p>New APPS give opportunity. Collaboration- whole institution approach. Give WP teams say in strategy. We can't do everything, collaborate.</p> <p>Student services and admissions- need to track throughout lifecycle. Collab across departments.</p>

	<p>Will be increased competition for applicants. Ref to UCAS, 1 million by 2026 apps.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. How many places do we have, grow2. Make tough decisions about who we recruit. Think about recruitment in a different way Challenge what works in A and P. Go back to basics for inclusive and supportive environment.
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